

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 24642 241647Z

64

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 COME-00 INT-05 OES-06 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO USDA/WASHDC

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 4282

ALL EC CAPITALS 0164

UNCLAS PARIS 24642

TOFAS 254

FOR FCA DIVISIONS

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: WEEKLY DROUGHT SITUATION REPORT

REF: TOFAS 238; PARIS 24330

1. ALTHOUGH RAINFALL HAS BEEN REPORTED FROM SOME STATIONS IN SOUTHERN FRANCE, LITTLE PRECIPITATION HAS BEEN RECEIVED BY DROUGHT PARCHED AREAS OF NORTHERN, WESTERN AND CENTRAL FRANCE. AS "SECHERESSE" WEARS ON TOWARDS SEPTEMBER, CONCERN MOUNTS NOT ONLY FOR CROPS WHICH CAN STILL BE AFFECTED BY DROUGHT AND FOR CATTLE WHICH MUST BE FED THROUGHOUT FALL AND WINTER, BUT ALSO FOR PROBLEMS OF INDUSTRY WHICH MUST COPE WITH HIGHER BILLS FOR IMPORTED PETROLEUM TO REPLACE HYDROELECTRIC POWER AND RIVER TRANSPORTATION. AS WATER SUPPLY DECREASES, POLLUTION PROBLEMS INCREASE AND CONCERN ALSO MOUNTS OVER IMPACT ON WATER TABLE.

2. OUR ESTIMATES FOR WHEAT AND BARLEY REMAIN UNCHANGED. UNDER IMPACT OF CONTINUING DROUGHT POOR CORN CROP IS SUFFICIENT TO MEET DEMAND FOR FEEDSTUFFS. THIS SITUATION IS UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 PARIS 24642 241647Z

FERING ADDITIONAL STRESS, AND WE HAVE REDUCED OUR ESTI-

MATE TO 5.5MILLION MT FROM OUR LONG-STANDING ESTIMATE OF 5.7 MILLION MT. FRENCH CORN PRODUCERS' ASSOCIATION (AGPM) ADVISES US FROM ITS HEADQUARTERS AT PAU THAT THEY NOW ESTIMATE TOTAL SURFACE OF CORN WHICH WILL BE HARVESTED AT 1.5 MILLION HECTARES. THIS REDUCED AREA RESULTS PARTLY FROM POOR CONDITION OF CROP AND PARTLY FROM INCREASED USE OF CORN FOR ENSILAGE, GIVEN STRONG PRICES CAUSED BY SERIOUS FORAGE DEFICIT DOCUMENTED IN LATEST FEED AND GRAIN REPORT. WE ARE LEAVING OUR ESTIMATE FOR CORN IMPORTS AT 1.5 MILLION MT (AN IMPORT BALANCE OF ABOUT ONE MILLION MT) ALTHOUGH WE AGAIN STRESS THIS SHOULD BE VIEWED AS MINIMUM FIGURE. A HARD WINTER, WITH SIGNIFICANT SNOW COVER IN CATTLE AREAS COULD SEND THIS FIGURE SHARPLY HIGHER.

3. PRESS REPORTS A PROPOSAL FOR EC TO SUSPEND DUTIES ON CAULIFLOWER, ONIONS AND CARROTS FROM EASTERN EUROPE, GREECE AND SPAIN. SUMMER OR TABLE STOCK POTATOES HAVE BEEN MOST HURT. FIGURES FOLLOW (LAST YEAR IN PARENS-- MILLION MT):

TOTAL PRODUCTION	5.36	(7.25)
TABLE STOCK	3.9	(5.8)
EARLY	0.55	(0.59)
OTHER	0.90	(0.89)

4. PARIS 24330 DESCRIBES MANY POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF DROUGHT. HOWEVER, EVENTS CONTINUE TO BREAK RAPIDLY WITH SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN MINISTERIAL LINEUP EXPECTED. TOMORROW, AUGUST 25, AGMIN BONNET WILL HOLD PRESS CONFERENCE ON DECISIONS OF GOF CONCERNING IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE FOR AG SECTOR. THIS AND OTHER POLICY DECISIONS WILL BE REPORTED ASAP.

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